

Message Text

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PAGE 01 PHNOM 05901 021354Z

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ACTION EA-06

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FM AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH

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C O N F I D E N T I A L PHNOM PENH 5901

LIMDIS

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: CGEN, CVIS, PFOR, CB, US

SUBJECT: ASSISTANCE TO CAMBODIANS DEPARTING PHNOM PENH

REFS:(A) STATE 071910

(B) BANGKOK 5385

1. IN ACCORDANCE INSTRUCTIONS REFTEL WE WILL OF COURSE RENDER ALL POSSIBLE ASSISTANCE TO THESE CAMBODIAN CITIZENS WHO ARE TO TRAVEL TO THE UNITED STATES. HOWEVER, WE WISH TO BRING TO THE DEPARTMENT'S ATTENTION WHAT WE BELIEVE ARE VERY SERIOUS POLICY CONSIDERATIONS THAT GO BEYOND THE MERE MATTER OF HELPING THESE CAMBODIAN DEPENDENTS JOIN THEIR HUSBANDS/FATHERS IN THE UNITED STATES. WE REALIZE THAT CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE CAMBODIANS MENTIONED IN REFTEL ARE SPECIAL BECAUSE:

- A. THE FOUR GKR OFFICIALS ARE NOW IN THE U.S. UNDER ASIA FOUNDATION TRAINING GRANTS;
- B. CONGRESSMAN GOLDWATER AND OTHER CONGRESSMEN ARE INTERESTED IN THIS CASE.

2. CLEAR IMPLICATION FROM INFORMATION GIVEN IN REFTEL IS THAT THESE CAMBODIANS ARE INTENDING TO DEPART THIS COUNTRY FOR GOOD BECAUSE OF THE CURRENT WAR SITUATION
CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 02 PHNOM 05901 021354Z

HERE. A SERIOUS QUESTION THUS ARISES IN OUR MINDS AS

TO WHETHER THEY ARE GENUINE NON-IMMIGRANTS OR WHETHER OUR CONSUL WOULD BE FULLY JUSTIFIED IN TREATING THEM AS IMMIGRANTS, THAT IS, PERSONS WHO HAVE NO INTENTION OF RETURNING TO CAMBODIA. WE AGREE THAT THE FOUR GKR OFFICIALS SHOULD BE IN THE UNITED STATES ON J-1 VISAS, WHICH REQUIRE THEM TO SIGN PLEDGES THAT THEY WILL NOT ATTEMPT TO CHANGE THEIR STATUS TO THAT OF PERMANENT RESIDENTS, BUT THE FACT THAT THEY ARE NOW EXTRACTING THEIR FAMILIES FROM PHNOM PENH MAKES US QUESTION WHAT THEIR FUTURE INTENTIONS MAY BE.

3. WHAT THE DEPARTMENT MUST REALIZE AND, WE BELIEVE, GIVE SERIOUS POLICY ATTENTION TO AT THIS TIME, IS THAT THERE ARE A LARGE NUMBER OF CAMBODIANS WHO BELIEVE THE SITUATION HERE IS BECOMING "HOPELESS" AND WHO WOULD LIKE TO FLEE ABROAD BY ANY MEANS POSSIBLE. SUCH PEOPLE MAY, FOR EXAMPLE, INCLUDE CLOSE MEMBERS OF THE MARSHAL'S ENTOURAGE WHOSE PROTECTOR HAS JUST LEFT CAMBODIA, PROBABLY FOR GOOD, AND WHO WILL DECIDE THAT THE BETTER PART OF VALOR RECOMMENDS THEIR DEPARTURE FROM THE COUNTRY AS SOON AS POSSIBLE. WE HAVE THE CASE TODAY OF THE NEW ASSISTANT MILITARY ATTACHE ASSIGNED TO WASHINGTON (THIS SUBJECT COVERED SEPTTEL), WHOSE ASSIGNMENT TO THAT POST LAST YEAR WE WERE ABLE TO SQUASH ON THE BASIS THAT THE GKR HAD DECLARED ITS INTENTION TO REDUCE THE NUMBER OF MILITARY ATTACHES ABROAD TO HELP SAVE CRITICALLY SHORT FOREIGN EXCHANGE. THIS OFFICER IS A VERY CLOSE ASSOCIATE OF NON NON, THE MARSHAL'S BROTHER, AND IT MAY BE THAT HIS ASSIGNMENT TO WASHINGTON IS A MEANS OF HAVING HIM JOIN THE LON NOL PARTY IN THE UNITED STATES WHILE AT THE SAME TIME GIVING HIM A JOB WHICH WILL HELP HIM SUPPORT HIMSELF AND HIS FAMILY.

4. WE HAVE ALREADY HAD REQUESTS FROM FANK OFFICERS NOW UNDERGOING TRAINING IN THE UNITED STATES (SEE FOR EXAMPLE PHNOM PENH 4711) WHO ARE WORRIED THAT THEIR FAMILIES MAY BE TRAPPED IF AND WHEN THE GKR COLLAPSES, AND WHO WISH TO EXTRACT THEM BEFORE THAT HAPPENS. WE HAVE HAD OTHER SUCH QUERIES FROM FANK PERSONNEL NOW CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 PHNOM 05901 021354Z

GOING ABROAD FOR TRAINING.

5. THE DEPARTMENT MUST DECIDE TO WHAT EXTENT WE WISH TO FACILITATE THIS SORT OF EXODUS FROM CAMBODIA, WHICH AT SOME POINT IN TIME MAY REACH ENORMOUS PROPORTIONS. IT IS NOT FOR THIS EMBASSY TO SAY WHO SHOULD OR SHOULD NOT EXTRACT THEMSELVES FROM CAMBODIA. WHAT WE DO WISH TO DRAW TO THE DEPARTMENT'S ATTENTION IS THAT A GREAT

MANY APPARENTLY NON-IMMIGRANT VISA APPLICANTS MAY IN FACT BE INTENDED IMMIGRANTS IN THE SENSE THAT THEY ARE PLANNING TO LEAVE THE COUNTRY FOR GOOD, WITH NO INTENTION OF EVER RETURNING. WE WOULD LIKE TO RECEIVE SOME GENERAL OR SPECIFIC GUIDANCE AS TO HOW WE HANDLE SUCH CASES FROM THE VISA-ISSUING POINT OF VIEW.

6. OUR RECOMMENDATION IS THAT THE DEPARTMENT AUTHORIZE APPROPRIATE PROCEDURES FOR ENSURING EARLY U.S. VISA ISSUANCE TO FAMILY MEMBERS WHO WOULD BE SEPARATED IN THE EVENT CAMBODIA FALLS UNDER A TOTALITARIAN GOVERNMENT WHICH WILL NOT ISSUE EXIT VISAS TO THE UNITED STATES.

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